

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 AID-05 IGA-01 L-03 H-02 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02

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R 302150Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1009

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CS

SUBJECT: INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION

REF: SAN JOSE 2686

1. DURING MEETING WITH ME JULY 28, PRESIDENT ODUBER EXPRESSED HIS BEWILDERMENT THAT U.S. GOVERNMENT FUNDS SHOULD BE USED TO FINANCE A NEWSPAPER LIKE PUEBLO WHICH PRESENTS A LINE SO CONTRARY TO AMERICAN INTERESTS, SO OPPOSED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF COSTA RICA, AND CONSEQUENTLY SO HARMFUL TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF U.S. RELATIONS WITH THIS COUNTRY. HE SAID THAT PUEBLO IS BY FAR THE MOST DANGEROUS AND HARMFUL PUBLICATION IN THE COUNTRY. HE HAD INTENDED TO GET SOME MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL T SSEMBLY TO CALL FOR AN INVESTIGATION OF PUEBLO AND HAD RECEIVED INDICATIONS OF COMMUNIST SUPPORT, BUT THEN HE CHANGED HIS MIND BECAUSE OF REALIZATION OF THE RISK THAT THE INVESTIGATION MIGHT HAVE BEEN USED TO MAKE ACCUSATIONS OF PUEBLO HAVING LINKS WITH THE CIA OR TO CREATE SOME PUBLICITY WHICH WOULD BACKFIRE. HE WAS, HOWEVER, GREATLY DISPLEASED WITH U.S. SUPPORT TO THIS PUBLICATION AND WONDERED IF SOMETHING COULD BE DONE EITHER TO CANCEL THE PRESENT GRANT OR TO MAKE SURE THAT THE GRANT IS NOT RENEWED AND NO MORE FUNDS PROVIDED.

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2. I EXPLAINED THE NATURE OF THE INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION

AND ITS PROCEDURES. I MENTIONED THAT THE GRANT WAS NOT FOR PUEBLO BUT RATHER FOR A SUPPLEMENT WHICH WAS INTENDED TO INFORM THE CAMPESINOS AND TO GIVE THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON MATTERS OF NATIONAL INTEREST. I TOLD HIM OF MY OWN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE FOUNDATION FINANCING OF THE ORGANIZATION WHICH CONTROLLED PUEBLO, BUT EXPLAINED THAT THE FOUNDATION WAS NOT REQUIRED TO RECEIVE THE APPROVAL OF THE EMBASSY OR ANY OTHER U.S. GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION BEFORE GOING AHEAD WITH A PROJECT. I EXPRESSED DOUBTS THAT THE FOUNDATION COULD OR WOULD CANCEL THE GRANT. HOWEVER, I PROMISED THAT I WOULD PASS HIS VIEWS ALONG TO THE APPROPRIATE PEOPLE.

3. I WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT INFORMING THE IAF OF THIS CONVERSATION AND LETTING ME KNOW THE FOUNDATION'S REACTION TO THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS. TODMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLICATIONS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SANJO03210
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750263-1035
From: SAN JOSE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975078/aaaaagwd.tel
Line Count: 76
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 SAN JOSE 2686
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 SEP 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, CS, US, INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION, PUEBLO, (ODUBER QUIROS, DANIEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006